



## *The President's Daily Brief*

*11 January 1973*

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*FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY*

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

11 January 1973

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

North Vietnam is preparing its people for renewed US bombing above the 20th parallel. (Page 1)

President Thieu's decree designed to force South Vietnamese political parties to consolidate is meeting opposition from some politicians. (Page 2)

[ ] Soviets [ ]  
[ ] China [ ] (Page 3)

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President Marcos is getting ready to scrap the 1935 constitution of the Philippines. (Page 4)

The USSR continues to use the Somali port of Berbera for maintenance and supply operations. (Page 5)

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NORTH VIETNAM

Hanoi apparently believes the US may resume bombing above the 20th parallel. Recent intercepts indicate that North Vietnamese military units have been warned to expect new strikes. A message of 7 January, for instance, states that "there are many signs that the enemy will strike suddenly...to put pressure on the negotiations." Air defense preparations--including the creation of home guard antiaircraft units--are under way, according to Radio Hanoi. On 2 January, the party newspaper stressed that evacuation of cities remained an important task.

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[redacted] in Hanoi [redacted] a local newspaper of 9 January warned the populace to expect an "extremely violent resumption" of the bombings.

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*These warnings seem to be based on the assumption that another impasse in Paris is a strong possibility.*

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## SOUTH VIETNAM

President Thieu's recent decree designed to force South Vietnamese political parties to consolidate has aroused new concern among some politicians. As expected by the government, the politically influential--but non-party--An Quang Buddhists are unhappy with a requirement that all candidates for national office be endorsed by a legal party. An Quang leaders are organizing a new group of elected Buddhist officials, but they have given no indication yet that they will try to turn this group into a legal opposition party. The Buddhists are reluctant to challenge the government but they do not wish to remain on the sidelines with their vital interests at stake.

The Catholics are among the few groups responding positively. Several Catholic factions that have been cooperating in an informal alliance in recent months have decided to try to merge and seek validation as a legal party. Catholic political leaders do not believe such a party can be influential and they hope eventually to ally with non-Catholic groupings.

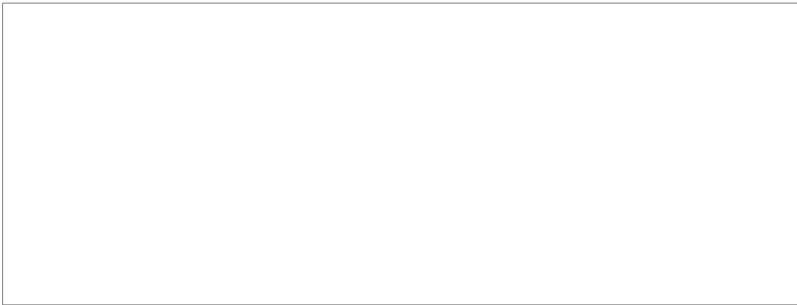
A number of the country's other political groups are attacking the decree, some complaining they cannot meet its requirements. Only a few are considering mergers. One party leader claims he will ignore the decree and has asked the Supreme Court to overturn it.

*One of Thieu's key lieutenants told US Embassy officers recently that such protests had been expected, but he predicted that after a period of agonizing, most important political factions would either join Thieu's Democracy Party or coalesce into one or two opposition parties. In fact, criticism is confined largely to Saigon politicians, and the decree has not seriously damaged the government's political position with the populace.*



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USSR-CHINA



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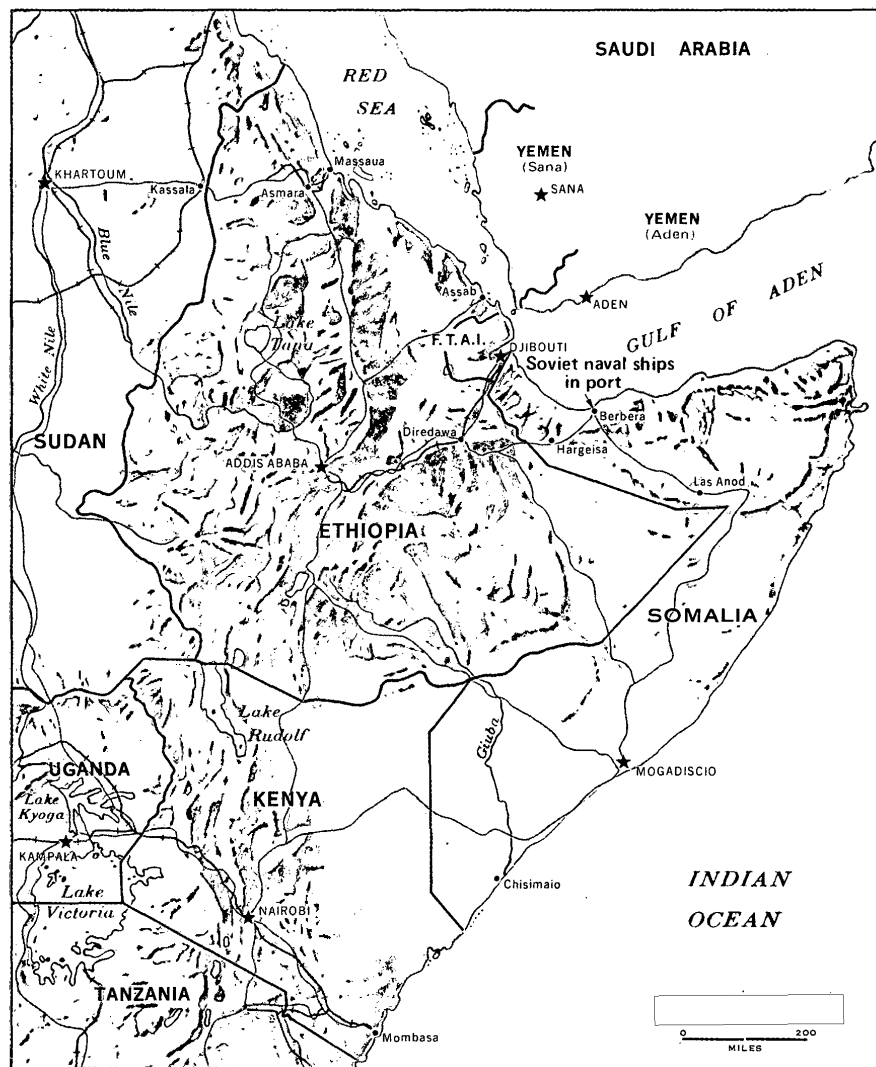
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PHILIPPINES

President Marcos is seeking to use the newly organized "citizens assemblies" to legitimize his one-man rule. The government has instructed the assemblies to demand that instead of a national referendum, the assemblies themselves should ratify Marcos' new constitution. The assemblies have also been told to recommend that they take over the responsibilities of existing popularly elected bodies, request a seven-year moratorium on popular elections, and seek a postponement of the time when the new parliamentary system goes into effect. They will request that in the meantime Marcos continue ruling through martial law.

*The "citizens assemblies" are government controlled and can be expected to follow these instructions faithfully.*

*Marcos' decision in effect to scrap the present constitution presumably stems from his desire to avoid a constitutional crisis on 22 January, when Congress is scheduled to reconvene. Marcos has been concerned about persistent reports that the Senate would challenge his martial law authority. Although the constitution is sufficiently vague to enable Marcos to suspend the Congress, he apparently believes resort to seemingly democratic action by the assemblies will be more palatable politically.*



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NOTES

USSR-Somalia:

[redacted] seven Soviet naval ships in the port of Berbera--the largest number yet observed there. [redacted] a submarine tied up next to a repair ship in the port. This [redacted] provides further evidence that the Soviets have acquired rights to use Berbera for maintenance and replenishment operations.

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Warsaw Pact:

[redacted] foreign ministers of the pact states will meet in Moscow over the weekend to deal with the resumption next week of the multilateral preparatory talks on a Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and the West's invitation to begin talks on force reductions on 31 January. The Romanians, who were not invited to participate in the latter meetings, are lobbying in Western capitals for their inclusion. We expect they will take up the matter in Moscow as well.

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Fedayeen-Israel:

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Nationalist China: [REDACTED]

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Rhodesia-Zambia: Rhodesia's closure of its northern frontier on Tuesday is intended as a warning to President Kaunda of Zambia to clamp down on guerrillas operating out of his territory, rather than an all-out economic blockade to force him to take such action. Landlocked Zambia's copper exports--half of which are carried to the sea on Rhodesian railroads--will still be allowed to pass the frontier to the economic benefit of both countries. As long as such shipments are permitted, Kaunda is unlikely to curtail his support for anti-Rhodesian insurgents operating out of Zambia.

Australia: The Australian Wheat Board may refuse any more orders for export, even from traditional customers such as England and Japan. A severe drought has reduced harvest yields, and farmers are retaining larger supplies than usual for replanting and local use. The board believes deliveries from farmers this year will barely cover existing export commitments.

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